

# Employee FRONTLINE

A newsletter from the WA State Employee Assistance Program

## How to Be a Catalyst for Change

People who are catalysts make things happen. They're passionate about their jobs. But which came first - their passion or the ability to get things done? Learn to be a catalyst for change and you may experience renewed enthusiasm for your job: 1) Start by writing down three to five things that need improvement in your work environment over which you could influence correcting. 2) Next to each item, note ideas that'll lead to a solution. 3) From this list, choose one area of improvement where you're most likely to succeed, and take the first action step. Start small. It may only be a conversation with other influencers about possibilities. 4) From these conversations, consider your next small move. This is called "strategizing." As you make small, positive changes, you'll feel the momentum and be able to visualize success. Your enthusiasm will grow. Notice how focus, determination, patience - and a bit of political sensitivity - play key roles in creating change in your organization. You've just discovered a path to feeling more engaged and finding more meaning in your job.



## Managing Presentation Nervousness



Being overly nervous before a speech or presentation can interfere with your confidence, but a measured dose of it is crucial for your best performance. You'll probably never eliminate nervousness, but you can make it work for - rather than

against - you. Prior to your presentation, read your material aloud four to six times while standing up. Mouthing, hearing, and repeating the content "internalizes" it, permitting more spontaneity and faster recall to help you appear more natural. Accept that your audience wants you to succeed. Doing so will help you feel closer to them rather than feeling scrutinized by them. Do you have irritating nervous pangs of energy? See them as your race car's engines "revving" up. Manage these sensations with slow, deep breathing. Repeat as needed.

## Is That Enabling?

Most admissions to drug and alcohol treatment programs occur after family and friends start saying and doing things precipitated by crises caused by a drinker or drug user. Educating family and friends about their enabling behavior can help eliminate it. Such behavior includes the following: 1) accepting assurances about the temporary nature of the drug or alcohol problem; 2) avoiding confronting the user about problems that interfere with you or your life; 3) doing the job for the alcoholic/drug user because you want to "help"; 4)



avoiding confronting the drinker/drug user because of fear of ruining your

relationship; 5) protecting the drinker/drug user from management at work; 6) promising to confront the drinker/drug user if problems get worse, and then not doing so; 7) deciding the alcoholic isn't *that* bad yet or is a "functioning alcoholic"; 8) developing an ability to work around or adapt to the absenteeism or mood swings of the user; and 9) loaning money to the drinker drug user. Do any these enabling behaviors apply to you? Can't stop enabling? Talk with the EAP or a professional counselor to learn how to turn off your enabling behavior.

## Exercise to Reduce Risk of Stroke



A new study from the University of Alabama at Birmingham examined the relationship between exercise and stroke in a large bi-racial group of men and women in the United States. A total of 27,000 stroke-free blacks and whites ages 45 and older participated in

the study. The results showed that physical inactivity was reported by 33 percent of participants and was associated with a 20 percent increased risk of stroke. Those who reported they exercised at least four times a week were less likely to experience a stroke or mini-stroke. Among men, only those who exercised four or more times a week had a lower stroke risk. [Source: Exercise and Stroke](#)

## Improve Your Diversity Awareness Skills

Diversity awareness training isn't just about education; it's also about skills. Here are the five critical skills you need: 1) check biases (self-awareness for habits of thinking that could demonstrate intolerance or disrespect); 2) practice inclusiveness

(proactively seek to include others who may otherwise be treated with indifference); 3) seek clarification (when in doubt of the meaning of a communication, take initiative to ask for clarification in order to avoid conflict or misinterpretation); 4) champion respect (when disrespect is witnessed, confront it appropriately); and 5) concentrate on commonalities (a mind-set or approach to interacting with others that focuses on what's similar rather than different among us).



## Nipping Bullying in the Bud



Is your child being bullied? Frequently, children don't tell their parents if they are being bullied in school because of embarrassment, shame, or fear of repercussions. Find out if your school has an anti-bullying policy and follows it. Ask your

child daily how things are going in school. By discussing friends and relationships you'll increase the likelihood of your child mentioning the bullying sooner. Without communication, you may assume no bullying issues exist. The adverse consequences of bullying are well researched, so the federal government established [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov), a website where you'll find extensive resources on school bullying, its impact, and what you can do about it.

## Detachment: Getting Away from It All

"Getting away from it all," also known as detachment, is a powerful stress management technique, yet it may be the hardest to practice. Real detachment requires removing oneself from all sources of stress, including thoughts, aided by engaging in enjoyable - but unrelated - activities or distractions. This is tough to do in modern times. Detachment can also feel a bit disloyal if you think your workplace really doesn't want you to forget about work entirely while you're on vacation. If you play a pivotal role in your organization, you may feel you need to check your business email or call in. The more stressful your position, the harder detachment can be. If really letting go seems out of reach, plan to experience it for short periods of time, and build up. Find opportunities to regularly detach, even for 15-20 minutes. Leave the Smartphone behind. Eliminate distractions and feel the difference detachment can make.

## Newlyweds: Get in Sync with Money

Research conducted by Kansas State University may have found a clue to help newlyweds spot the most significant predictor of divorce—fighting about money—and put a stop to it early. Couples who start out their marriages fighting about money have the highest probability of divorce according to a study of 4,500 couples. Counseling about financial matters, goals, planning, and priorities early in the relationship can help couples get in sync with each other. Source:

[Financial Arguments](#)